AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-54 (Cancelled)

55.(New)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit operable to display a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay determination unit operable to determine a delay time according to a display mode of the text message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit; and

a voice output unit operable to output, via voice message, the information to be transmitted, when the delay time determined by said delay determination unit passes after the text message is displayed by said text display unit.

56.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55,

wherein said delay determination unit is operable to:

determine that the delay time should be short in the case where the size of characters in the text message displayed by said text display unit is large; and

determine that the delay time should be long in the case where the size of the characters is small.

57.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55,

wherein said delay determination unit is operable to:

determine that the delay time should be long in the case where a

distance between a focal point and characters in the text message displayed by said text display unit is long, the focal point being set on said text display unit for attracting user's attention; and

determine that the delay time should be short in the case where the distance is short.

58.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55,
wherein said delay time determination unit is operable to:
determine that the delay time should be short in the case where a contrast between a position and characters in the text message is large, the position being a position, on said text display unit, onto which the user focuses his/her attention; and

determine that the delay time should be long in the case where the contrast is small.

59.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55,
wherein said delay determination unit is operable to:
determine that the delay time should be short in the case where a degree of flashing the characters in the text message displayed by the text display unit is high; and

determine that the delay time should be long in the case where the degree of flashing is low.

60.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, further comprising:
a personal information obtainment unit operable to obtain an age of the user,
wherein said delay determination unit is operable to:

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determine that the delay time should be long in the case where the obtained age is high; and

determine that the delay time should be short in the case where the obtained age is low.

61.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, further comprising:

a habituation specifying unit operable to obtain the number of times the user operates said voice output apparatus,

wherein said delay determination unit is operable to:

determine that the delay time should be short in the case where the obtained number of operations is large; and

determine that the delay time should be long in the case where the obtained number of operations is small.

62.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, further comprising:

a habituation specifying unit operable to obtain an operation time during which the user operates said voice output apparatus,

wherein said delay determination is operable to:

determine that the delay time should be short in the case where the obtained operation time is long; and

determine that the delay time should be long in the case where the obtained operation time is short.

63.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 57,

wherein said text display unit is operable to display an agent as the focal point.

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64.(New)   A voice output method used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said method comprising:

displaying a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

determining a delay time according to a display mode of the text message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit; and

outputting, via voice message, the information to be transmitted, when the delay time determined by said delay determination unit passes after the text message is displayed by said text display unit.

65.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 64,

wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be short in the case where the size of characters in the text message displayed by said text display unit is large; and

determining that the delay time should be long in the case where the size of the characters is small.

66.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 64,

wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be long in the case where a distance between a focal point and characters in the text message displayed by said text display unit is long, the focal point being set on said text display unit for attracting user's attention; and

determining that the delay time should be short in the case where the

distance is short.

67.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 64,
    wherein said determining includes:
    determining that the delay time should be short in the case where a contrast between a position and characters in the text message is large, the position being a position, on said text display unit, onto which the user focuses his/her attention; and
    determining that the delay time should be long in the case where the contrast is small.

68.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 64,
    wherein said determining includes:
    determining that the delay time should be short in the case where a degree of flashing the characters in the text message displayed by the text display unit is high; and
    determining that the delay time should be long in the case where the degree of flashing is low.

69.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 64, further comprising:
    obtaining an age of the user,
    wherein said determining includes:
    determining that the delay time should be long in the case where the obtained age is high; and
    determining that the delay time should be short in the case where the obtained age is low.

70.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 64, further comprising:

obtaining the number of times the user operates said voice output apparatus,

wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be short in the case where the obtained number of operations is large; and

determining that the delay time should be long in the case where the obtained number of operations is small.

71.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 64, further comprising:

obtaining an operation time during which the user operates said voice output apparatus,

wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be short in the case where the obtained operation time is long; and

determining that the delay time should be long in the case where the obtained operation time is short.

72.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 66,

wherein said displaying includes

displaying an agent as the focal point.